562 better food to the male members of the family. This
[262] fact, and the hard work the Badaga women have to perform, may perhaps account to some extent for the slight build of the Badagas as a race. The male
462 Badaga, too, works in the field, or at his own craft if he
562 is not a cultivator, but his love for ready cash is always so great that, even if he had a harvest to gather the next morning, he would run away as a cooly for two annas wages." Further, Mr. Grigg states that "as the men constantly leave their villages to work on coffee plantations, much of the labour in their own fields, as
[461] well as ordinary household work, is performed by the
[583] women. They are so industrious, and their services of such value to their husbands, that a Badaga sometimes
462 pays 150 or 200 rupees as dowry for his wife." In the off season for cultivation, I am informed, the Badaga woman collects faggots for home consumption, and stores them near her house, and the women prepare the fields for cultivation by weeding, breaking the earth, and collecting manure.

• 651 In his report on the revenue settlement of the
656 Nilgiris (1885), Mr. (now Sir) R. S. Benson notes that "concurrently with the so-called abolition of the bhurty (or shifting) system of cultivation, Mr. Grant abolished the peculiar system in vogue up to that time in Kundahnad, which had been transferred from Malabar to the Nilgiris in 1860. This system was known as erkādu kothukādu. Under it, a tax of Re. 1 to Re. 1–8–0 was levied for the right to use a plough or er, and a tax of from 4 to 8 annas was levied for the right to use a hoe or kothu. The so-called patta issued to the ryot under this system was really no more than a license to use one or more hoes, as the case might be. It merely specified the amount payable for each instrument, but in no cases

1: Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
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651 656 was the extent or position of the lands to be cultivated specified. The ryot used his implements whenever and wherever he pleased. No restrictions, even on the felling of forests, were imposed, so that the hill-sides and valleys were cleared at will. The system was abolished in 1862. But, during the settlement, I found this erkādu kothukādu system still in force in the flourishing Badaga village of Kinnakorai, with some fifty houses."

622 In connection with the local self-government of the Badagas, Mr. A. Rajah Bahadur Mudaliar writes to me as follows. "In former days, the monegar was a great personage, as he formed the unit of the administration. The appointment was more or less hereditary, and it generally fell to the lot of the richest and most well-to-do. 622 627 All disputes within his jurisdiction were placed before him, and his decision was accepted as final. In simple matters, such as partition of property, disputes between husband and wife, etc., the monegars themselves disposed of them. 622 But, when questions of a complicated nature presented themselves, they took as their colleagues other people of the villages, and the disputes were settled by the collective wisdom of the village elders. 623 627 They assembled at a place set apart for the purpose beneath a nīm (*Melia Azadirachta*) or pīpal tree (*Ficus religiosa*) on a raised platform (ratchai), generally situated at the entrance to the village. The monegar was *ex-officio* president of such councils. He and the committee had power to fine the parties, to excommunicate them, and to readmit them to the caste. 622 Parents resorted to the monegar for counsel in the disposal of their daughters in marriage, and in finding brides for their sons. 584 If any one had the audacity to run counter to the wishes of the monegar in matters

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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As further evidence of the ceremonial circulation of coinage Ward (1821, lxxi) also discusses Badaga bridewealth,[14] and the payment of twenty Cantirai fanams (coins totalling nearly six rupees) to a mother when, after divorce, she gave custody of her newborn child to her former husband. To judge by later Badaga practices it is very likely that a gift of coins[15] was already an integral part of all family ceremonies. Such a gift was actually a delayed exchange and implied that a return gift was expected later when similar circumstances arose. By 1848 only the East India Company's coinage was in circulation, but a good deal of it was also hoarded by burial or made into ornaments (Ouchterlony, 1848, 72; Shortt & Ouchterlony, 1868, 72).

This system of coinage circulation was very slow and uncertain, as it depended on the occasional celebration of weddings and other family events. Coins clearly had a ritual value for Badagas and were important in this period as a symbolic link between various social units (as to some extent they still are). We have no definite evidence that coins were used for payment of fines to the headmen as early as the eighteenth century; but throughout much of the nineteenth century a regular schedule of fines was maintained in Badaga judicial practice.[16] Coinage did not define values in a local Nilgiri market but did act as a convenient and reliable means of storing credit acquired in the lowland markets where, from 1799, the British pursued a policy of fixing local grain prices by currency values.

By the start of the last century the Badagas had become 'terribly impoverished', and most were heavily in arrears with payment of land revenue. 'The rates of assessment were undoubtedly low', were based on acreage and 'varied with the appearance of the crop at harvest-time' (Grigg, 1880, 312; Francis, 1908, 268). During the first thirty years of British rule a decline in these payments set in. From 1799 to 1813 the average annual revenue from the entire plateau was Rs. 14,762, but over the next fourteen years it fell to Rs. 6,000 (Grigg, 1880, 292; Francis, 1908, 268). In 1801 it was Rs. 13,425; in 1811 it was Rs. 15,067 (Grigg, 1880, 314); in 1821 it was Rs. 9,000 (Mackworth, 1823, 123–126); and by 1830 it was down to Rs. 6,000 (Baber, 1830, 314). There were several reasons for this decline, the most general one being the meagre control over the plateau that could be exercised from Dannaika Ko:ṭe; Sullivan attributed the low revenue to lack of a proper road (Grigg, 1880, 280–281, 314). The tax-farmers who operated for some time on the

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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plateau, from 1807,[17] were too demanding of the dues they had paid the East India Company for the privilege of collecting, while in some other years the commune headmen were too slack about the collection. The drought of 1805-1807, the general shortage of coin, the after-effects of Tippu's plundering of Badaga villages, all perhaps contributed to the decline in the payments, if not the fortunes, of the Badagas at this period.

Despite the British policy of fixing grain prices they did show fluctuations from year to year. Sarada Raju's excellent study of economic conditions in Madras Presidency during the first half of the nineteenth century clarifies these fluctuations. He does not offer specific data for Coimbatore District (which then included the Nilgiris); nevertheless he is surely justified in his view that on a long-term basis the trend was similar in all districts (Sarada Raju, 1941, 227). As his statistical data for the Presidency adequately confirm (1941, 228–230),

> ... prices were high in the first few years of the nineteenth century. The country had just emerged from a protracted period of war and anarchy during which rival armies and plundering bands had laid whole districts desolate. Cultivators who had fled to the jungles and hills were but gradually returning to their neglected fields.... The period was also marked by a number of scarcities, more or less severe. The very first year, 1799–1800, witnessed a severe dearth and again between 1805 and 1807 occurred another famine, when prices ruled very high. After this prices were persistently low ... from 1807–8 to 1850–51 prices rose above the [economic analyst's] base only on seven occasions; and these were famine years.
>
> When the pendulum swung back, low prices ruled till 1812, when two dry seasons caused a scarcity which lasted till 1813–14. But with the coming of the rains, a lower level was reached and we hear frequent complaints of the "continued low price of grain".... All the Collectors remarked about it, affecting as it did the ryots' [peasants'] ability to pay the revenue (Sarada Raju, 1941, 231–232).[18]

While several seasons of adverse weather mentioned by Sarada Raju did give rise to famine conditions in Coimbatore District, which was one of the driest in the Presidency, it is very unlikely that famine also occurred on the Nilgiri Plateau at those times.

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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7

Growth of the Cash Economy

IMPACT OF BRITISH IDEAS ON THE BADAGA ECONOMY (1799–1850)

During the first half of the nineteenth century the British took a number of administrative steps which moved the basal Badaga economy decisively, if unintentionally, into the status of a monetized market economy. The ceding of the Nilgiri Plateau to the East India Company by the Treaty of Seringapatam in 1799 was the first step in this process. Though it was another twenty years before any British actually settled on the plateau the demand of land-revenue payment became more insistent and regulated than it had been under Tippu Sultan's tenuous régime. Badagas must therefore have been obliged to trade more persistently with the lowlands to acquire the coinage being demanded at the Dannaika Kotte outpost every year.[1]

A second point of impact on the Badaga economy was the Company's policy of fixing grain prices. The rigid control of prices, attempted by the District Collectors throughout Madras Presidency, must have encouraged the Badagas to market grains in the Coimbatore Plain (which lay within that Presidency), where they could feel somewhat confident about getting satisfactory prices and not being cheated. Had the grain prices been more of a gamble the Badagas would have been less inclined to produce a surplus of grain and carry it the long distance down to the market.

When the pioneering John Sullivan came to the hills in 1819 he

and bees-wax. Other exports of the later nineteenth century were coffee, tea, potato, barley, resin, silk and hides.

AGRICULTURAL CHANGE OVER THE PAST CENTURY

Until 1863 the Badagas not only cultivated fields close to the villages but also practised shifting agriculture in the wooded areas. At that time the government abolished, at least formally, the system of swidden cultivation and thereby posed a serious threat to those Badaga farmers who had depended on it (for full details, see Grigg, 1880, 314-327). According to government experts swidden farming was wasteful of timber resources and led to soil erosion. More significantly, though, there was also an eagerness among British settlers to cover vast tracts of the Nilgiris with tea and coffee plantations. In 1863 the British abolished the revenue system current in the Kundena:du area,[7] which had involved issuing a licence for each hoe and each plough without otherwise taxing or delimiting the land a man could cultivate or recording what acreage he was entitled to use. Until these restrictions came into effect many Badaga farmers made periodic use of lands five to ten times as extensive as their revenue assessments justified.[8] By about 1880 these restrictions, legislated during 1862-1864, had become realities in all parts of the Nilgiris.

The rapidly increasing Badaga population was now faced with a depleted acreage of usable farmland, a situation that worsened with erosion and land sales. For the first time in history their fields, once surveyed and registered in accordance with the Land Settlement rules, came to have a monetary value—especially as under the Waste Land Rules a man's land could be auctioned and thus irretrievably lost if he became too much in arrears with the payment of land revenue. A farmer therefore tried to hold on to as much registered land as he could.[9]

The British land legislation did not cause an immediate shortage of land among the Badagas. On the contrary, Grigg notes (1880, 480) that in the 1870s land was so 'cheap' that the Badagas who did own some or bought more tried to cultivate areas that were too large for their resources, with the result that their labour and capital were spread too thinly across the land to produce adequate returns. The slim yield of soil not properly fertilized and skimpy cultivation of too large an area impelled the poorer farmers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to sell land to British

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

452 426 Central Bank; and the fourth runs the Marketing Society (Thorner, 1964, 71–73).

426 The law today limits the monthly interest on pawned items to a rate varying from ¾% to 1½%, depending on the size of the loan. Even so, loans between Badagas now command an interest rate of 1% to 4% per month; while the professional money-lenders also secretly charge interest beyond what they are entitled to. On a loan of up to Rs. 200, for example, the Marwari lender can legally charge only 1½% per month simple interest. He gives a receipt for that rate but at the same time insists on one year's interest in advance, and compounded, at 2% per month. One can hardly castigate the Marwari for his cupidity, or the Badaga for still patronizing him, however, when one learns the scale of bribes which some local government officials expect in return for granting loans from the cooperative bank.

452 (426) Yet the cooperative movement has gone a long way towards protecting Badagas from the high interest rates of private money-lenders; the Panchayat Unions and some multi-purpose societies even help farmers by supplying fertilizers, insecticides and modern equipment at cost prices. If these societies operate somewhat more effectively here than in other parts of India, the explanation lies in the fact that the Badaga societies are not in practice multi-caste institutions. They are run largely by and for the members of this one community, thus avoiding some of the factionalism and favouritism that commonly pervade such societies elsewhere.

MODERN SYSTEMS OF MARKETING

178 (966) With the spread of urbanization during the mid-nineteenth century, other markets besides that at Ootacamund began to cater to the needs of local villagers. Regular weekly markets opened at Coonoor, Kotagiri, Wellington, and later in several villages at some distance from any town.[21] The use of these markets by the Badagas is related to two other developments discussed earlier: first, the payment of land revenues and the restriction on use of land caused by the Land Settlement and legislation to stop swidden farming in the forests; and secondly, the consequent movement of some Badaga labourers, including women and children, onto the tea and coffee plantations, where they earned a

(651) (654) (434)

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(651) cash wage (Grigg, 1880, 34, 471; see above, pp. 149, 152).
(654) Greatly increased contact with markets and with Europeans
(434) provided the impetus towards full participation in the cash economy, yet this transition took a century to complete. For the
178 vast majority the basic requirements of food, goods and services
[177] continued to be provided either by their own efforts or by their Toda, Kota and Kurumba associates. The itinerant Chetti trader continued to make monthly visits, as he still does. From 1825 onwards Badagas could visit local markets on the plateau for what they had previously bought in Gunḍulupe:te and Ka:ramuḍu, but they never sold very much in the markets and thus rarely had
(442) spare cash to spend. In the early days of cash-crop farming very few Badagas had enough knowledge or personal contacts to arrange the bulk sale of their produce in a distant market. They used to sell their crops instead to a broker in the Nilgiris, until it became known that a farmer who could find a market and negotiate a sale by himself would make bigger profits. An important motivation was the desire to acquire consumer goods
(342) that were now becoming available on a scale and in a variety never before known to the Badagas. Later in the nineteenth century there is evidence of increasing affluence which found expression in the shift from thatched to tiled rooves. '... in 1871 only 1,914 houses out of the 13,922 in the district were tiled; whereas now [1908] tiles are the rule ... in Badaga villages' (Francis, 1908, 130, compare Shortt & Ouchterlony, 1868, 58;
(432) Grigg, 1880, 29, 225; 'Geofry', 1881, 132). For the farming family engaged in marketing their crops, cash was necessarily the only medium of exchange, and much of their foodstuffs had to be
(291) bought in the town bazaar. A great variety of items was also being purchased, the most obvious of which were new clothes: in the 1890s men first began to sport European-style shirts and jackets, and in the 1930s women started to wear coloured *sa:ris* (B.E.M.S., 1897, no. 58, 90; Hockings, 1979a).

We may say that their commitment to the cash economy was complete by about 1930, in which year most Badagas permanently severed their traditional exchange relationship with the Kotas. This from the Badaga point of view was an advantageous move, for it allowed them to buy pottery, ropes and metal goods in the bazaar at a lower price than the Kotas commanded, and without delays. While the Kotas had not been receiving cash, the traditional dole of grain they were given at each harvest was becoming

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

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Table 3. *Occupations of the interviewed males, 1963*

		Rural Badagas	*All other Nilgiri rural communities*
I	Cultivating own or rented land	59.6%	30.7%
II	Agricultural labourer	5.0%	32.3%
III	Forestry and livestock	0.0%	7.4%
IV	Cottage industries	0.7%	5.8%
V	Manufacturing	3.7%	1.6%
VI	Construction	4.0%	2.6%
VII	Trade and business	0.3%	6.9%
VIII	Transport and communications	3.7%	4.2%
IX	Teaching and 'professions'	13.0%	5.3%
X	Non-workers, students	10.0%	3.2%
		(*n*=301)	(*n*=189)

178 184 182 619 [621]

The 1970s find an increasing number of young, college-educated Badagas settling in towns with their wives and taking well-paid jobs. These people still observe community endogamy, but in other respects their behaviour suggests that the distinctive identity of the Badaga community is nearing its end. It is no longer uncommon for urban Badagas to address rural Badagas in Tamil rather than their own language: ashamed of the state government's designation of their people as a 'Backward Class',[28] they are trying to merge with the South Indian city society and deny what they consider an 'uncivilized' parentage. Few such people regularly visit their native villages now. Once marriage with non-Badagas increases and becomes acceptable the palisade around their community will have fallen.

NOTES

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1. Even though there was no tax-farmer on the plateau to harrass them until 1807; Buchanan, 1807, vol. II, 247.
2. Harkness, 1832, 138, note; Shortt & Ouchterlony, 1868, 17; Grigg, 1880, 455–456; Francis, 1908, 167; Price, 1908, 23; Hockings, 1973, 867. According to Metz, 1864, 5, Sullivan came to the Nilgiris 'at the solicitation of the hill-people themselves'. Sullivan, in a letter to the Board of Revenue in 1819, explained that 'the inhabitants are extremely anxious to have their lands measured, under an idea that they are paying more than they ought to do'; Grigg, 1880, 280. Another early influence on Badaga farming may have been the experimental farm for European crops operating at Ke:ti from 1830 to

175 177

618 Thoraiyas to virtually remain serfs, despite outside job opportunities. Female and male Thoraiyas continue to work on Badaga landholdings and serve in Badaga homes. Thoraiya males trained, for example, to be barbers, blacksmiths, brickmakers, carpenters, or washermen, have further served the Badagas. For their services, Thoraiyas are paid in cash and in kind. At periodic intervals and upon special occasions, such as Thoraiya weddings, presents are imparted by Badaga masters.

175 241 Plants exploited by the Badagas. A representative list of plants grown by the Badagas in the early 1800s is obtained from the writings of Keys and Harkness (Table III). Millet species were apparently the main subsistence cereals, but it is worth noting that barley and wheat were also raised. Plants grown commercially at that time were fenugreek (Trigonella foenum-graecum L.), garlic, mustard, and poppies (Harkness 1832: 138). Poppy juice, the source of salable opium, was extracted by women and children. Iron nails were used to scratch poppy capsules in the evenings, and gummy exudations were collected on following mornings. Capsules thus scratched every four days eventually died. Opium slowly obtained in this fashion was eaten and not smoked. Seeds collected from dead capsules were sold after sun-drying, and by boiling remaining capsule shells in water a stupefying beverage was obtained (Francis 1908: 290-291; Metz 1864: 153; Ward 1821: lxiii). According to Metz (1864: 153), fenugreek was sold to low country merchants; men from Coimbatore bought large quantities of garlic and onions, which were carried down to the plains on bullocks; and mustard seed sale alone was said by the Badagas

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439 (651)

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439 (651) to pay the government tax (presumably land revenue). Badagas slowly adopted "English" vegetables, the term commonly applied to vegetables introduced by the English (Table III). By 1865 the Badagas were growing potatoes, which were to become their main commercial crop (Markham 1862: 367; Metz 1864: 153-154).

241 911 Major changes in crop emphasis from the late 1800s to the present are best revealed by statistics resulting mainly from Badaga cultivation. In 1875 there were 15,728 acres of Italian millet, 4,662 acres of little millet, 3,761 acres of barley, 3,430 acres of finger millet, 3,199 acres of wheat, only 754 acres of potatoes, 355 acres of mustard, 169 acres of vegetables, 144 acres of fenugreek, 67 acres of horse gram (Dolichos biflorus L.), and 66 acres of poppies grown on the Nilgiris (Grigg et al. 1880: xii). In 1895 Italian millet was still the leading crop, but potato acreage had risen to 2,032 acres. Poppies outlawed by the 1878 Opium Act were no longer grown (Benson 1895: 432-433). Little millet had become the most cultivated cereal in 1905, and finger millet was growing in importance (Francis 1908: 164). Demands for potatoes during World War I helped to convert Badaga agriculture from a subsistence stage with some commercial crop production to a commercial farming stage. In 1914 there were about 4,000 acres with potatoes on the Nilgiris, but by 1920 potato acreage had doubled (Rao and Azariah 1953: 69). Before 1925 finger and little millets became the two important cereal crops, and remained the leading cereals from that time (Wood 1927: 210-223). Potato acreage has continually increased: by 1938 there were 12,000 acres, by 1950 almost 17,000 acres, and in 1960-61 there was a total

241 (656) (177) (311) (310)

244 ridges constructed in the same plots are planted with broad beans (Vicia faba L.) or peas. Kitchen gardens are typically better manured and cared for. Because they are nearer to community cattle-pens and (514) livestock huts, more manure is likely to be placed on them. Due to the absence of toilets in houses, community dwellers naturally defecate [364] more frequently on nearby plots. And lastly, women recurrently spread kitchen ashes or trash over kitchen gardens. When family members have 241 time to spare, they may easily care for kitchen garden plots near the 592 communities in which they live. Women work on them between their 462 household duties, and men who are regularly employed work on them during off duty hours.

175 Shifting agriculture. In 1800 the Badagas were practicing shift-241 ing slash-burn (kottukadu) agriculture (Buchanan 1870, 1: 462). As 361 later writers described Badaga hamlets and villages in terms of permanence, it is conjectured that Badagas then dwelt in permanent communities and cultivated different plots on the nearby countryside from year to year. From the time Englishmen started to administer the Nilgiris 241 until the late 1800s, the bhurty revenue system existed over the upper •651 Nilgiris. Under this system a farmer could hold up to ten times the taxed land he actually cultivated in any single year. Therefore, a man who paid taxes on five acres could hold nine other five-acre plots scattered over the upper Nilgiris. Plot alternation accompanied by the necessary clearance of vegetation off fallowed land not cultivated for years, or off newly claimed forest land, formed a system of shifting agriculture. Another system was followed in the western Kundahs, which

241 •651 were transferred from Malabar to the Nilgiri District in 1860. After a farmer paid a tax ranging from one to one rupee and eight annas per plow, or four to eight annas per hoe (erkadu kottukadu revenue system), he could cultivate as much land as he desired to in any chosen locality. Forest lands were not excluded. Consequently, cultivated plots were constantly being abandoned for new ones opened up or recleared. The two land revenue systems resulting in shifting agriculture were formally abolished in 1863, but in actual practice they lingered on until about 1884 (Francis 1908: 268-270).

651 In 1863 the English instituted a system of taxation whereby farmers were expected to pay taxes on all claimed lands, but inaccurate knowledge concerning claimed lands and actual agricultural practices led to continuance of old ways. As a result of the Final Land Settlement of 1881-84, all claimed lands were mapped and accurately recorded [423] for taxation purposes. Each individual was given a title (patta) to his land, but from thenceforth was expected to pay land revenue based on land extent and quality (Francis 1908: 274-278). During post-1884 311 years remnants of old practices remained. Although Badagas paid revenue according to the lands owned by them, an individual's scattered [651] plots away from a community might be cultivated periodically during the years, or left vacant for years until the owner decided to place more land under cultivation. Plots close to a community, especially those used for kitchen gardens, were usually cultivated at least once [178] a year (Ranga 1934: 13-16). Nowadays, however, 1) fertilizer applica- [291] tion, 2) cash obtained through potato sales, 3) the spreading desire to plant more tea, and 4) decreasing opportunities for individuals to